

DESIGN AND FABRICATION OF BaTiO_3 HUMIDITY SENSOR USING
THICK FILM SCREEN PRINTING TECHNIQUE

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MASTER OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

2006

PERPUSTAKAAN UTHM



30000001957512

**DESIGN AND FABRICATION OF BaTiO₃ HUMIDITY SENSOR USING
THICK FILM SCREEN PRINTING TECHNIQUE**

By

WAN SUHAIMIZAN BIN WAN ZAKI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science**

June 2006

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents and the one i love for their constant support,
love and guidance during all moments of my life.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

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June 2006

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Thick film sensor technology has been recognized as an important technology in sensor manufacturing for the last decade. The technology contributes to the sensor development with the exploitation of the film itself as a primary sensing device. Most ceramic materials have been investigated as a humidity sensor mainly on porous structure prepared by thick film technology. These films have microstructure properties similar to those of sintered porous bodies, but the dimensions of the sensing devices can be reduced, which then can be used in hybrid circuits.

In this work, two types of analyses will be made based on Barium Titanate (BaTiO_3) dielectric material. The First one is to analysis the electrical properties of BaTiO_3 material in bulk and thick film forms and second analysis is to characterize thick film BaTiO_3 for a humidity sensor at room temperature. The BaTiO_3 powder was prepared through solid state reaction using a raw material Barium Carbonate (BaCO_3) and Titanium Dioxide (TiO_2). The thick film paste was prepared by mixing an organic vehicle with the sintered powder in appropriate ratio. The paste was then screen printed

onto a ceramic substrate in an interdigitated electrode pattern using DEK J1202 screen printing machine. The dielectric property of BaTiO₃ was investigated by varying the frequency in the range of 10Hz to 10 MHz using the Impedance Analyzer. The characterization of the thick film sensor with response to the Relative Humidity (%RH) was carried out in the Humidity Climatic Chamber in the range of 20%RH to 95%RH. LCR meter and PIC conditioning unit was used to measure the response of the BaTiO₃ thick film sample with the changes of the Relative Humidity..

The results showed that the dielectric response of the BaTiO₃ material in bulk and film samples are the same, based on the quasi dc concept. A smaller gap of interdigitated electrode pattern gave a higher response in dielectric properties compared to the bigger gap. The BaTiO₃ thick film sensor showed decrement in resistance and increment in capacitance with respect to the increases of Relative Humidity (RH). The voltage-humidity characteristic of the sensor showed a good linearity and the sensor response time is faster than the recovery time. The PIC conditioning circuit is designed to convert the analogue voltage into digital value and display the measurement result through Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) to make the system more user-friendly. As a conclusion, BaTiO₃ thick film shows a good promising material to be used as a humidity sensor based on thick film screen printing technology.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

**MEREKABENTUK DAN FABRIKASI BaTiO_3 PENGESAN KELEMBAPAN
MENGUNAKAN TEKNIK CETAKAN FILEM TEBAL**

Oleh

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Teknologi pengesan filem tebal telah dikenalpasti sebagai satu teknologi yang penting dalam fabrikasi pengesan untuk beberapa dekad yang lalu. Teknologi tersebut telah menyumbang kepada pembangunan pengesan dengan mengeksploitasikan filem tersebut sebagai pengesan primer. Kebanyakan bahan seramik yang telah dikaji sebagai pengesan kelembapan tertumpu kepada pembentukan struktur bahan yang porous. Filem tebal mempunyai ciri mikro-struktur yang sama dengan struktur porous badan bahan kepingan yang di bakar, tetapi dimensi ukuran pengesan filem dapat dikecilkan untuk kegunaan dalam litar hibrid.

Dalam kajian ini, terdapat dua bentuk analisis dilakukan terhadap bahan dielektrik Barium Titanate (BaTiO_3). Analisis pertama adalah pencirian dielektrik bahan BaTiO_3 dalam bentuk kepingan tebal dan filem tebal dan analisis kedua adalah analisis ciri filem tebal BaTiO_3 sebagai pengesan kelembapan pada suhu bilik. Bahan BaTiO_3 disediakan melalui tindak balas keadaan solid yang terdiri dari campuran bahan asas Barium Karbonat (BaCO_3) dan Titanium Dioksida (TiO_2). Dakwat filem tebal BaTiO_3

pula dihasilkan melalui campuran bahan organik pembawa dan bahan BaTiO_3 melalui nisbah yang tertentu. Dakwat ini diskrim cetakan keatas alas seramik yang mempunyai konfigurasi jejari elektrod menggunakan mesin skrin cetakan filem tebal DEK J1202. Ciri dielektrik bagi bahan BaTiO_3 diukur dengan mengenakan frekuensi diantara julat 10Hz hingga 10MHz menggunakan *Impedance Analyzer*. Ciri filem tebal BaTiO_3 sebagai pengesan kelembapan dijalankan didalam bekas kelembapan *Climatic* dalam julat kelembapan Relatif (RH) antara 20%RH hingga 95%RH. LCR meter dan PIC litar keadaan digunakan untuk mengukur tindakbalas filem tebal bahan BaTiO_3 terhadap perubahan kelembapan relatif tersebut.

Keputusan kajian menunjukkan bahawa mekanisme ciri dielektrik bahan BaTiO_3 dalam bentuk kepingan tebal dan filem tebal adalah sama, iaitu berdasarkan konsep semi-dc (*quasi-dc*). Jarak pemisah antara dua elektrod yang dekat menunjukkan perubahan ciri dielektrik yang lebih tinggi dibandingkan dengan jarak jejari elektrod yang lebih besar. Filem tebal pengesan kelembapan BaTiO_3 menunjukkan penurunan nilai rintangan dan peningkatan nilai kapasitan dengan peningkatan nilai kelembapan relatif (RH). Ciri graf voltan-kelembapan menunjukkan lenkungan linear yang baik dan pengesan kelembapan memberikan masa tindak balas yang lebih pantas dibandingkan dengan tindak balas pemalakkan pengesan. Penggunaan Mikro-pengawal PIC sebagai isyarat keadaan membolehkan isyarat voltan analog ditukar kepada nilai digital dan hasil keputusan pengukuran kelembapan dipaparkan melalui paparan cecair kristal (*liquid crystal display*) menjadikan sistem ini lebih mesra pengguna. Kesimpulannya, filem tebal BaTiO_3 menunjukkan potensi yang baik untuk dijadikan bahan dalam pembuatan pengesan kelembapan menggunakan teknologi filem tebal.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the Name of ALLAH, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Mr. Rahman Wagiran for his endless support, guidance, wise words, encouragement, ideas and help throughout my research. I also want to thank my committee members, Prof. Abdul Halim Shaari and Dr. Samsul Bahari Mohd Noor for their support, information and ideas that committed in the success of this research work.

I would like to thank my parents and family and to all my friends especially to Mr. Walter and Faizal for their kind support, understanding and encouragement during the completion of my research.

Many thanks also goes to all my colleagues and UPM support staff.

I certify that an Examination Committee has met on 30th June 2006 to conduct the final examination of Wan Suhaimizan Wan Zaki on his Master of Science thesis entitled "Design and Fabrication of BaTiO₃ Humidity Sensor using Thick Film Screen Printing Technique " in accordance with Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Act 1980 and Universiti Pertanian Malaysia (Higher Degree) Regulations 1981. The Committee recommends that the candidate be awarded the relevant degree. Members of the Examination Committee are as follows:

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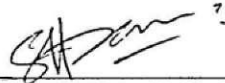


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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the thesis is based on my original work except for equations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted for any other degree at UPM or other institutions.



WAN SUHAIMIZAN WAN ZAKI

Date: 18/8/2006

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
DEDICATION	ii
ABSTRACT	iii
ABSTRAK	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
APPROVAL	viii
DECLARATION	x
LIST OF TABLES	xiv
LIST OF FIGURES	xv
LIST OF ABBREVIATION	xviii
 CHAPTER	
 1 INTRODUCTION	 1.1
1.1 Introduction	1.1
1.2 Problem Statement	1.3
1.3 Research Objective	1.5
1.4 Scope of Works	1.5
 2 LITERATURE REVIEW	 2.1
2.1 Introduction	2.1
2.2 Humidity Sensor	2.1
2.2.1 Capacitive Humidity Sensor	2.5
2.2.2 Resistive Humidity Sensor	2.8
2.2.3 Integrated Humidity Sensor	2.11
2.2.4 Thick Film Humidity Sensor	2.13
2.2.5 Discussion on Humidity Sensor	2.15
2.3 Thick Film Screen Printing Technology	2.17
2.3.1 Thick Film Fabrication Technique	2.17
2.3.2 Thick Film Paste	2.19
2.3.3 Screens	2.20
2.3.4 Substrate	2.22
2.3.5 Squeegee	2.22
2.4 Investigation on Material: Barium Titanate	2.22
2.4.1 Dielectric Theory	2.23
2.4.1.1 Dielectric Permittivity	2.25
2.4.1.2 Complex Plane Analysis	2.29
2.4.1.3 Electrical Resistivity	2.31
2.4.2 Formation of BaTiO ₃ Powder	2.31
2.4.3 Temperature Dependence of Permittivity	2.34
2.4.4 Frequency Dependence of Permittivity	2.35

2.5	PIC Conditioning Circuit	2.36
2.6	Summary	2.42
3	METHODOLOGY	3.1
3.1	Introduction	3.1
3.2	Sample Preparation	3.1
3.2.1	Raw Material	3.2
3.2.2	Mixing and Milling	3.2
3.2.3	Calcination	3.2
3.2.4	Pressing	3.3
3.2.5	Sintering	3.3
3.2.6	Film Preparation	3.4
3.3	Fabrication of BaTiO ₃ Thick Film	3.6
3.3.1	BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Structure Design	3.6
3.3.2	Screen Preparation	3.8
3.3.3	BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Paste Preparation	3.10
3.3.4	Screen Printing Procedures	3.10
3.4	Sample Characterization	3.14
3.4.1	X-Ray Diffraction (XRD)	3.14
3.4.2	Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM)	3.15
3.4.3	Electrical Properties of Material	3.16
3.4.4	Humidity Measurement	3.16
3.5	PIC Conditioning Circuit	3.18
3.5.1	Power Supply	3.18
3.5.2	Buffer Voltage Divider	3.19
3.5.3	PIC16F877 Microcontroller	3.20
3.5.4	Software Development Tools	3.23
4	RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	4.1
4.1	Introduction	4.1
4.2	XRD Powder Analysis	4.1
4.3	Electrical Properties	4.4
4.3.1	Dielectric Permittivity of BaTiO ₃ Material	4.4
4.3.2	Complex Capacitance Analysis	4.7
4.3.3	Complex Plane Analysis	4.10
4.3.4	Effect of Interdigitated Electrode Structure	4.13
4.3.5	DC Conductivity Measurement	4.16
4.4	BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Humidity Sensing Properties	4.17
4.4.1	Microstructure Analysis	4.18
4.4.2	Resistance-Humidity Characteristic	4.19
4.4.3	Capacitance-Humidity Characteristic	4.22
4.5	PIC Conditioning Circuit	4.24
4.5.1	Voltage-Humidity Characteristic	4.24
4.5.2	Sensor Response-Recovery Time	4.25
4.5.3	PIC Based Measurement Technique	4.27
4.6	Discussion on The BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Humidity Sensor	4.33
4.7	The Weakness of The Developing Thick Film Sensor	4.38

5	CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	5.1
5.1	Conclusion	5.1
5.2	Recommendation	5.2
REFERENCES		R.1
APPENDICES		A.1
BIODATA OF THE AUTHOR		B.1
LIST OF PUBLICATIONS		L.1

LIST OF TABLES

Tables	Page
3.1 Different ratio of Organic Vehicle for Paste Preparation	3.5
3.2 Design Parameter for Sample EI1, EI2 and EI3 of Screen Printed BaTiO ₃	3.8
4.1 Diffraction Angle, d-spacing and Plane of BaTiO ₃ Sample	4.3
4.2 The Fitting Value for BaTiO ₃ Bulk and Film Sample	4.9
4.3 Fitted Values for the Complex Impedance Plot	4.13
4.4 Resistance and Electrical Resistivity Value of Thick Film Sample	4.17
4.5 Error Calculation of Voltage-Humidity Response Base on Polynomial and Linear Equation at Temperature of 25°C	4.30
4.6 Response and Recovery Time for Different Type of Thick Film Material	4.36

LIST OF FIGURES

Figures	Page
1.1 Basic Components of a Measurement System	1.2
2.1 Schematic Diagram of Water Adsorption on Porous Ceramic Surface	2.4
2.2 The Constituent Parts of Thick Film Screen Printer	2.18
2.3 Thick Film Screen	2.20
2.4 Relationship between Polarization Type and Frequency	2.23
2.5 Surface Changes Generated in Parallel Plate Capacitance	2.26
2.6 Conceptual View of The Total Current in a Leaky Capacitor	2.27
2.7 The Depressed Cole-Cole Plot	2.30
2.8 Basic Perovskite Structure of BaTiO ₃	2.32
2.9 Crystallographic Changes of BaTiO ₃	2.33
2.10 Temperature Dependence of Relative Permittivity for BaTiO ₃	2.34
2.11 ADCON0 Register	2.38
2.12 ADCON1 Register	2.39
3.1 BaTiO ₃ Material in Pellet Form	3.3
3.2 Layout of the BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Structure with Interdigitated Electrode	3.7
3.3 Thick Film Screen Printing Mesh for Interdigitated Electrode Pattern	3.9
3.4 A DEK RS1202 Automatic Screen Printer	3.11
3.5 Firing Temperature Profile of Thick Film Sample	3.13
3.6 Climatic Chamber for The Thick Film Sensor Characterization	3.17
3.7 Power Supply Circuit	3.19
3.8 Voltage Divider with Buffer Circuit	3.19

3.9	PIC Conditioning Circuit with BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Sensor	3.21
3.10	Overall Schematic for the Sensor System	3.22
3.11	PCB Layout for the Sensor Conditioning Circuit	3.23
3.12	PIC C Compiler IDE	3.24
3.13	MPLAB IDE	3.24
3.14	Flowchart on Software Development for PIC16F877	3.25
4.1	XRD for the Sample of BaTiO ₃	4.2
4.2	XRD Stick Pattern for Standard BaTiO ₃ and Produce BaTiO ₃ Powders	4.3
4.3	Dielectric Permittivity for BaTiO ₃ Bulk and Thick Film Samples	4.5
4.4	Permittivity Losses for BaTiO ₃ Bulk and Thick Film Samples	4.6
4.5	Complex Capacitance versus Frequency for Bulk Sample	4.7
4.6	Complex Capacitance versus Frequency for Thick Film Sample	4.8
4.7	The Circuit Model Represent the Response Mechanism of BaTiO ₃ Sample	4.8
4.8	Complex Impedance Plot for BaTiO ₃ Bulk Sample	4.11
4.9	Complex Impedance Plot for BaTiO ₃ Film Sample	4.11
4.10	An Equivalent Circuit Representing the Semi-circle	4.12
4.11	Capacitance versus Frequency for Samples E11, E12 and E13	4.14
4.12	Frequency Response of C'' for Samples E11, E12 and E13	4.15
4.13	Current-Voltage Characteristic of BaTiO ₃ Film Samples	4.16
4.14	SEM image on the Surface of BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Humidity Sensor	4.18
4.15	Resistance versus Relative Humidity (%RH) at Temperature of 25°C	4.19
4.16	Resistance versus Relative Humidity (%RH) at Two Different Temperatures. a) T=25°C b) T=40°C	4.22

4.17	Capacitance versus Relative Humidity (%RH) a) Experiment value b) The Best Fitted graph	4.23
4.18	Voltage versus Relative Humidity (%RH) at Two Different Temperatures a) T=25°C b) T=40°C	4.25
4.19	Response-recovery Time of the BaTiO ₃ Thick Film Sensor When Transferred From a) 33%RH to 95%RH and b) From 95%RH to 33%RH	4.26
4.20	Voltage-Humidity Response of The BaTiO ₃ Thick Film at Temperature of 25°C with the Best Fitted Graph of Polynomial	4.27
4.21	Linearization of Voltage-Humidity Characteristic at Low Humidity Level Measured at Temperature of 25°C	4.28
4.22	Linearization Voltage-Humidity Characteristic at High Humidity Level Measured at Temperature of 25°C	4.29
4.23	PIC Conditioning Circuit with LCD Display	4.32

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Å	Angstrom
AC	Alternating Current
Al ₂ O ₃	Aluminum Dioxide
BaCO ₃	Barium Carbonat
BaTiO ₃	Barium Titanate
BCD	Binary Code Decimal
A/D	Analogue to Digital
C	Celsius
CMOS	Complementary Metal-Oxide Semiconductor
CVD	Chemical Vapor Deposition
DC	Direct Current
DIL	Dual in Line
DA	Data Acquisition
ESL	Electro-Sciences Laboratories
FET	Field Effect Transistor
g	gram
Hz	Hertz
IC	Integrated Circuit
IDE	Interdigitated Electrode
I/O	Input/output
kHz	kilo Hertz
LCD	Liquid Crystal Display

m	meter
MHz	Mega-Hertz
min	minute
ml	mililiter
mm	millimeter
mV	miliVolt
OH	Hydroxide
pF	pico Farad
R _{ref}	Reference Resistance
R _{sen}	Sensor Resistance
RAM	Random Access Memory
RH	Relative Humidity
RISC	Reduce Instruction Set Computer
ROM	Read Only Memory
rpm	round per-minute
SMU	Source Measurement Unit
sec	second
SEM	Scanning Electron Microscope
SPWM	Sinusoidal Pulse Width Modulation
SSFCL	Solid State Fault Current Limiter
SSTS	Solid State Transfer Switch
SVC	Static VAR Compensator
TiO ₂	Titanium Dioxide
V	Volume

V_{out}	Voltage Output
V_{p-p}	Volt Peak to Peak
V_{ref}	Voltage Reference
wt	weight
XRD	X-Ray Diffraction
μm	micrometer

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

In recent years, the demand for various kinds of physical and chemical sensors is increasing day by day [1]. Among these sensors, the measurement of humidity has received great attention due to the recognized importance of water partial pressure in many industrial processes and in the market of air-conditioning systems for the automatic regulation of living environments. With the advance and broadening applications of microprocessors, there are increasing efforts to develop humidity sensors based on variation electrical parameters for automated control system purpose. The trends towards automatic control systems has recently gained importance due to the increasing need in quality control of production process and products in various industries such as the production of electronic devices, precisions instruments, textiles and foodstuffs [2].

Many different materials have been studied for used as a sensor element in humidity measurement devices. Among them, ceramic oxides have shown advantages in terms of thermal, physical and chemical stability and mechanical strength [3]. The major factors that influence the humidity sensitivities of ceramic materials rely on its surface and

microstructure. Thus, controlling porosity and surface area are important aspects in determining the humidity-sensitive electrical properties of ceramic products.

Most ceramic materials have been investigated as a humidity sensor mainly on porous structure prepared by film technology. These films have microstructure properties similar to the sintered porous bodies and the film structure is small and suitable for hybrid circuit application [4]. The basic components of measurement system in hybrid circuit may contain at least a sensor for measuring input, a processor for processing the data and an actuator to provide display or execute action as shown in Figure 1.1.

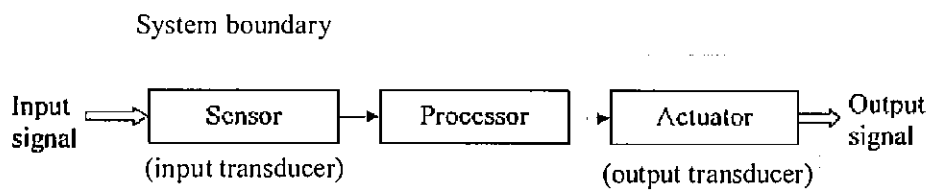


Figure 1.1: Basic Component of a Measurement System.

Great effort has been done to develop a hybrid circuit by merging all of the electronics components into single sensing module for miniaturization of electronic system which lead to a low cost, small and high reliability product. Integrating the sensing element with microprocessor unit, will make the sensor become a smart system. The smart sensor system is defined as a system having a powerful and localized processing capability, allows many of the data handling aspect of measurement to be devolved down to the sensor itself, leaving the host computer free to manage the procedural

aspect of the whole system [5]. A system that is able to convert analogue signal to digital signal, where the functions such as linearization, temperature compensation, and signal processing can be included in the package to provide higher level information processing is also termed as a smart sensor [6].

1.2 Problem Statement

Silicon planar technology is widely used in the fabrication on today's sensor mainly on integrated smart sensor. This technology posses many valuable characteristics for sensor applications and it's provides a high degree of integration into microelectronic sensor subsystem by using standard processing techniques. Currently, the major drawback of silicon sensors concerns their ability to provide a cost-effective solution to a particular problem such as to fulfill demand on low-to-medium-volume of requirement sensors per year [7].

An alternative approach in producing an integrated sensor with a low cost and reliable small electronic system is through thick film hybrid circuit. This hybrid circuit is generally regarded as being compact, robust and relatively inexpensive and have found application in areas such as televisions, calculators, telephones, automotive electronics and many more [7]. The flexibility offer in thick film process either in preparation of thick film materials or by the choice of shape and size of the thick film sensor structure give advantage over silicon technologies. In fabrication of thick film sensors, a lot of